

Vollbrath House
712 South Alamo Street
San Antonio, Bexar County
Texas

HABS No. TEX-3152

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Western Office, Division of Design and Construction
1000 Geary Street
San Francisco, California

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PHOTOGRAPH-DATA BOOK REPORT
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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VOLLRATH HOUSE AND STORE

San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

ADDRESS: 712 South Alamo Street
OWNER: Mr. Walter F. Rudeloff
OCCUPANT: Vacant
USE: None
ARCHITECT: Unknown
BUILDER: Henry Pauly

HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The structure is architecturally significant as a picturesque example of two-story Victorian building built by a Middle European immigrant family.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Louis Vollrath emigrated from his native Hanover to land in Brownsville, Texas in the 1840's. In 1853, he married Augusta Quatvaslem, a young lady considerably his junior. Moving northward into the interior of Texas, he purchased and settled on a farm near Kosciusko in Wilson County with his growing family in 1855. Here he blacksmithed and raised horses. In 1871, he moved to San Antonio with his younger children, among them two sons named Louis and Herman, leaving an older child, Adolph, to maintain the farm and continue raising horses. Among other real estate ventures, he purchased the property at South Alamo and Barrera Streets, built a one-story residence at 704 South Alamo (not the subject of this report), and followed his horse shoeing trade, assisted by his sons,

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in a shop in the rear. He also built a large barn, where he kept horses brought in from the farm for sale.

Upon his death in 1880, his widow, Augusta, moved to Georgetown temporarily but soon returned to remarry a Mr. Freeland, and began construction of the two-story structure at 712 South Alamo, completing it in 1882. The first floor was intended for a bakery and the second floor was partitioned for living quarters for herself, her new husband, and small children. After Augusta Vollrath Freeland's death in 1909, the second floor was occupied by two of her daughters, Mary and Augusta. Augusta occupied the premises until illness and old age forced her to vacate it in 1960.

The houses and property have just been sold, and plans to restore and preserve the two structures for use is contemplated.

Alterations and Additions: Indications are that the 8' wide two-story porch extending the full length of the rear of the house, excluding the stairway, has been rebuilt. The lower southeast end of this porch was converted into marginal bath facilities when single thickness wood partitions were installed on the lower floor to convert this area into living quarters.

REFERENCES

Alluring San Antonio, by Lillie Mae Hagner, pp. 32, 33, published by the Naylor Press in 1940.

Tom Vollrath, 222 Staunton Lane, San Antonio, Texas

Mrs. Laura Washichek, 1635 W. Thorain, San Antonio, Texas

Bexar County Deed Records, 1871, Vol. W1, p. 106

Bexar County Probate Records, 1882, Estate #1204.

Bexar County Deed Records, 1910, Vol. 323, p. 306

ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

Architectural Character: The house is two-story, with gabled roof and second story cantilevered balconies on the front and southwest sides; and a two-story porch with shed roof and exterior stair on the south east side, partially enclosed at the lower level for bath. Lower floor is about 1'-0" above grade.

Condition of Fabric: Poor.

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EXTERIOR

Overall Dimensions: 27' wide by 27' deep; rear porch 8' wide; balconies 4' wide.

Foundations: Continuous native stone.

Wall Construction: Quarried caliche units, 20" to 24" long by 12" high by 12" thick, originally stuccoed with 1" wide tooled mortar joints. Sills, girders, joists, and rafters are yellow pine.

Porches: Second story balcony in front is approximately 21' long with cutout or "jigsaw" balusters; balcony on southwest side is about 10' long with similar balusters. Exterior stair, 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ " yellow pine treads, 3/4" yellow pine risers, 1-3/8" square balusters, fashioned 2x4 hand rail.

Chimneys and Fireplaces: Two chimneys in walls on each side with thimble openings to rooms.

Doorways and Doors: Four-panel yellow pine with vertical center rail, two light transom over; doors on front and southwest side have panels with heavy panel molds; upper two panels are arched and glazed. All exterior doors have wood trim and wood jambs and sills. Second floor exterior doors, four-panel wood with transom over; all exterior doors opened in, and were guarded with adjustable louvred shutters opening out.

Windows: 6/6 - 10"x20" light double hung, not counter balanced; three-panel adjustable louvre shutters opening out, many of them gone. All windows have exterior wood trim.

Roof: Original standing seam tin, sloping about 3 in 12.

Cornice: One foot overhang with exposed ornamental rafters.

INTERIOR

Floor Plan: Living room, kitchen, two bed rooms on lower floor, divided with temporary partitions of a later date; originally, all one room with 12 foot ceiling. Similar division on second floor with original wood stud partitions plastered both sides. Bath

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facilities of later date in rear porch area on lower floor.
Second floor ceilings, 10 feet.

Flooring: 1" x 5" yellow pine.

Wall and Ceiling Finish: Plaster on all exterior (masonry)
walls and on both sides of second story partitions. 1" x 5"
double-beaded wood ceilings with 3/4" quarter-round mold at
walls.

Doors: Four wood panel with vertical center rail; in masonry
walls; door jambs are wood.

Trim: 1" x 5" plain yellow pine; base is 1" x 10" yellow pine.
All openings have wood jambs.

Stairway: None (on interior).

Partitions: Single thickness 1" x 5" wood, (temporary type)
on first floor; wood stud, plastered both sides on second
floor.

Hardware: Rim lock with white porcelain knobs.

Lighting: Originally kerosene lamps; now wired for electricity.

Heating: Thimbles in walls for stove pipe connection to wood
burning stoves; now piped for gas.

OUTBUILDINGS

None in evidence. The blacksmith shop and the barn originally
located on southeast property line in connection with the
raising and sale of horses disappeared in the 1920's.

SITE:

The house is located on the southwest corner of South Alamo
and Barrera Streets on a piece of property fronting 166 feet
on South Alamo and 83 feet on Barrera. It faces west by north,

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and is situated at the South Alamo property line. No vestiges of original site improvements, fences, shrubbery, garden paths, etc., remain.

Prepared by,

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February 1964

APPROVED:

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DATE: *April 1964*

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